

Exhibit K

LONG ISLAND / CRIME

Feds: MS-13 member admits role in quadruple slaying in Central Islip



A memorial to four young men whom federal prosecutors say were murdered by MS-13 in April 2017 still stood nearly a year later by the spot they were found. Credit: Jessica Rotkiewicz

By Robert E. Kessler

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An MS-13 member, who was 15 years old when four young men were killed in a Central Islip park, pleaded guilty Friday to taking part in the April 2017 crime.

Shortly before pleading to U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Bianco in Central Islip, Freiry Martinez, now 17, voluntarily agreed to be treated as an adult.

Martinez, of Brentwood, was one of a dozen people, six of them juveniles at the time, who took part in the killings, according to federal prosecutors.

Martinez pleaded guilty to a single count of racketeering with five predicate acts: conspiracy to murder rival gang members, and four individual counts of murder — one for each of the victims.

The four killed were: Justin Llivicura, 16, of East Patchogue; Jorge Tigre, 18, of Bellport; Michael Lopez Benegas, 20, of Brentwood; and Jefferson Villalobos, 18, of Pompano Beach, Florida.

Before his plea, Martinez, admitted that he used a machete to “hit someone repeatedly ... Justin Llivicura.”

Other gang members also struck Llivicura, Martinez said, speaking in Spanish with his words being translated by an interpreter.

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Martinez said he and other MS-13 members planned the attack in order to kill “members of a rival gang who had disrespected the MS-13.” Martinez identified the rival gang as 18th Street.

Families of the victims have denied that they were members of any gang.

Martinez said the victims were lured to the park by two young women who said they were going there to “smoke weed.” When the victims got to the park, they were surrounded by MS-13 members who attacked them with machetes, knives and clubs, Martinez said.

In August, another juvenile MS-13 member, who was also 15 at the time, pleaded guilty to being involved in the killings of the four young men.

Newsday has reported that gang experts and sources have attributed the recent increase in MS-13 violence to a small fraction of the thousands of unaccompanied minors who have entered the country from Central America since 2015. These teenagers are eager to prove themselves to be even more violent than previous gang members who have been arrested, experts have said.

Eastern District United States Attorney Richard Donoghue said in a statement released after the Martinez plea: “Prosecution by prosecution, defendant by defendant we are dismantling MS-13 through an effort that will not end until they are ended.”

Since 2003, Donoghue said his office and the FBI’s Long Island Gang Task Force, working with local law enforcement, have arrested and successfully prosecuted hundreds of MS-13 members, including dozens of clique leaders for murders, attempted murders and assaults.

The killings of the four young men, and that of two high school girls, Kayla Cuevas and Nisa Mickens, also allegedly by MS-13 in September 2016, have intensified focus on the gang. President Donald Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions have vowed to eliminate MS-13.

Martinez's attorney, Martin Geduldig, of Garden City, said afterward: "It's a tragedy for everyone concerned."

Geduldig said his client lived by himself and had come to the country alone from El Salvador.

Eastern District federal prosecutors John Durham, Raymond Tierney and Paul Scotti declined to comment.

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Bob Kessler covers federal law, including law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, DEA, IRS and ATF, as well as the federal courts.



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Crime & Safety

MS-13 Member Pleads Guilty For Role in Quadruple Murder: Feds

The 17-year-old faces life in prison, officials say.



Priscila Korb, Patch Staff 

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CENTRAL ISLIP, NY – A member of the MS-13 gang pleaded guilty on Friday to charges in connection to his involvement in the quadruple murders of four men in 2017, according to the U.S. Attorney.

Freiry Martinez, now 17, pleaded guilty to racketeering charges in connection with his participation in the April 11, 2017 murders of Justin Llivicura, Michael Lopez, Jorge Tigre and Jefferson Villalobos, according to the U.S. Attorney.

The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Joseph F. Bianco.

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On April 11, 2017, two female associates of the MS-13 lured five young men, including the four victims, to a community park in Central Islip at the direction of Martinez and other MS-13 members, the U.S. attorney said.

The MS-13 members believed the victims were members of a rival gang who were disrespectful toward the MS-13, so Martinez, along with other MS-13 members and associates, met in a wooded area behind the park where they

distributed weapons, discussed the plan to kill the victims and then awaited their arrival, the U.S. attorney said.



Once the female MS-13 associates arrived at the park, they led the victims to a wooded area and sent the MS-13 members a text message describing their location, the U.S. attorney said.

Martinez, the other MS-13 members and associates then surrounded the victims and killed Llivicura, Lopez, Tigre and Villalobos using machetes, knives and wooden clubs, the U.S. attorney said.

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The fifth intended victim escaped.

After the attack, Martinez and his associates dragged the victims' bodies to a more secluded spot and fled, the U.S. attorney said.

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The four bodies were discovered the following evening.

Martinez, who was 15 years old at the time of the murders, initially was charged as a juvenile that was filed under seal in the Eastern District of New York on July 10, 2017, the U.S. attorney said.

Martinez fled from New York to Virginia and later to Maryland after the murders and remained a fugitive until November 21, 2017 when he was arrested in Montgomery County, Maryland, according to the U.S. attorney.

Martinez, an illegal alien from El Salvador, was then turned over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and removed to the Eastern District of New York in custody by the United States Marshals Service, the U.S. attorney said.

Following the government's application to transfer Martinez to adult status

When sentenced, Martinez faces a maximum of life in prison. After completing his sentence, he faces deportation from the United States.

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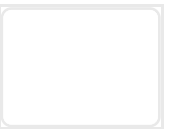


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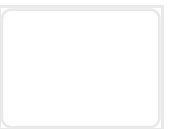
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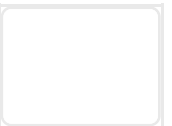
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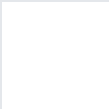
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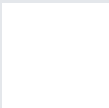
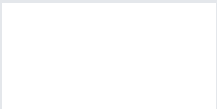
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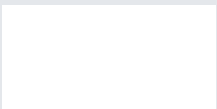
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